The Names & Attributes of Allah

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The Names & Attributes of Allah

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اللَّهُ لا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۖ لَهُ الأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ

"Allah — there is no deity worthy of worship except Him. To Him belong the Most Beautiful Names."[1]

Allah has Names and Attributes that are countless, but He informed us of some of them, and the Messenger also informed us of them. Before I begin, we say Ahl As-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah[2].

When we say Ahl As-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah, we mean the righteous *As-Salaf As-ṣāliḥ* (predecessors), may Allah be pleased with them. Because nowadays we have deviant sects; for example, the *Ash'aris* say that they are Ahl As-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah, while they negate the Attributes of Allah (سبحانه وتعالى). They are not Ahl As-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah. Ahl As-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah are those who follow the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman, and the Companions, the righteous predecessors.

These are the *Salaf As-ṣāliḥ*. As for those innovating Ash'aris, they are not from them. Before I begin, I will say:

Tawḥīd is divided into three categories.[3]

They say Ibn Taymiyyah stated this, but this division existed before Ibn Taymiyyah, and the division of Tawḥīd into three categories is present in the Qur'an; they derived it from the Qur'an.

Ahl As-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah, the righteous predecessors, may Allah be pleased with them, differed. *Ar-Rubūbiyyah* (Lordship)— there is no disagreement about it; even the disbelievers believe that Allah is the Creator and the Provider. There is also disagreement concerning *'Ulūhiyyah* Divinity.

[1] Sūrat Ṭā Hā (20:8)

[2] They are the Muslims who follow the Qur'an and Sunnah as understood by the Companions and the early righteous generations, holding firmly to the truth without introducing new beliefs into the religion.

[3] Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyyah (To single out Allah in His **Lordship**), Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyyah (To single out Allah in **Worship**), Tawḥīd al-Asmāʾ wa al-Ṣifāt (To affirm Allah's **Names and Attributes** as they appear in revelation).

But the greatest disagreement is over the Names and Attributes, between us and the *Ash'aris*, the *Maturidis*, the *Mu'tazilah*, the *Mu'atilah*, and the *Mujasimah*. Nearly all of the disagreement is over the Names and Attributes.

The Salaf, as Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman, and all the Companions said, affirm the Attributes by affirming what Allah affirmed. They say:

The Attributes of Allah are what Allah, Exalted is He, affirmed for Himself, and this is the greatest proof and the best of proofs.

Allah is more knowledgeable of Himself; He described to us His Attributes (وتعالى سبحانه) and what the Messenger ﷺ affirmed for Him as well, because he is the Messenger of Allah. These Attributes are affirmed **without interpretation**[4], **without negation**[5], **without resemblance**[6], and **without likening**[7].

We have a principle laid down by Allah (سبحانه وتعالى):

لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ

"There is nothing like unto Him."[8]

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) is different, nothing is like Him.

وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

"He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing."[9]

[4] (بِلا تَأْوِيلٍ – Bilā Taʾwīl)
[5] (بِلا تَعْطِيلٍ – Bilā Taʿṭīl)
[6] (بِلا تَمْثِيلٍ – Bilā Tamthīl)
[7] (بِلا تَكْيِيفٍ – Bilā Takyīf)
[8] Sūrat al-Shūrā (42:11)
[9] Sūrat al-Shūrā (42:11)

Anything that comes to your mind about Allah is not like Him, there is nothing like Him. There is no one like Allah; no matter how much you compare or strive, there is nothing similar to Allah. This is the principle upon which Ahl As-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah proceed:

وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

"He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing."[10]

He placed for us two Attributes here.

When the Messenger recited this verse:

وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

"He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing."[11]

The All-Hearing, The All-Seeing, "All-Hearing" means He Hears. The Messenger affirmed for us in this verse the Attribute of Hearing for Allah. He placed his right index finger in his right ear and his left index finger in his left ear.

He affirmed two Attributes while establishing a principle, that there is nothing like Allah and also the verse we always read and everyone knows:

وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

"And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him."[12]

There is no likeness for Allah, no equal, no substitute, and no one whatsoever resembles Allah (سبحانه وتعالى).

[10] Sūrat al-Shūrā (42:11)
[11] Sūrat al-Shūrā (42:11)
[12] Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ (112:4)

The *Ṣifāt Allāh* (Attributes of Allah)are divided into two categories.

The scholars divided them into two categories:

1. **الصِّفَاتُ الذَّاتِيَّةُ** - Essential Attributes and

2. **الصِّفَاتُ الْفِعْلِيَّةُ** - Action-based Attributes.

The essential attributes are those inseparable from Allah, that which accompanies Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) inherent to His Essence and never separates from Him. Such as Knowledge, Hearing, Sight, Life, Power, Might, Mercy, and Self-Subsistence (*Al-Qayyūmiyyah*).

These are essential Attributes; they do not separate from Allah. Easy. And also there are action- based Attributes.

The action-based Attributes are those which Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) performs. Allah Performs Actions. Allah, (سبحانه وتعالى) is above the seventh heaven; above the seventh heaven is a sea, and above the sea is the Throne of The Most Merciful, and above it is Allah (سبحانه وتعالى).

الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى

"The Most Beneficent (Allah) Istawa (rose over) the (Mighty) Throne (in a manner that suits His Majesty)." [13]

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) descends in the last third of every night. This is an Action Allah performs every night.

[13] Sūrat Ṭā Hā (20:5)

يَنْزِلُ رَبُّنَا كُلَّ لَيْلَةٍ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا حِينَ يَبْقَى ثُلُثُ اللَّيْلِ الآخِرُ فَيَقُولُ مَنْ يَدْعُونِي فَأَسْتَجِيبَ لَهُ وَمَنْ يَسْأَلُنِي فَأُعْطِيَهُ وَمَنْ يَسْتَغْفِرُنِي فَأَغْفِرَ لَهُ

"Our Lord descends every night to the nearest heaven, until the last third of the night remains, so He says: 'Who is calling upon Me so that I may answer him? Who is asking from Me so that I may give him? And who is seeking forgiveness from Me, so that I may forgive him.'"[14]

In the last third, Allah descends from above the seven heavens to the lowest heaven and says:

Is there anyone seeking forgiveness?

Is there anyone repenting?

Is there anyone asking?

Is there anyone sick?

Allah asks all of this while people are asleep.

These attributes are called action-based Attributes, actions Allah performs. Then when Allah becomes angry, this is an action; and the coming on the Day of Resurrection—this also is an action.

وَجَاءَ رَبُّكَ وَالْمَلَكُ صَفًّا صَفًّا

"And your Lord comes with the angels in rows."[15]

On the Day of Resurrection *(Lā Ilāha Illā Allāh)*[16], Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) will descend.

[14] Jami` at-Tirmidhi 3498
[15] Sūrat al-Fajr (89:22)
[16] Here the Shaykh حفظه الله تعالى briefly stopped to Glorify Allah

Then they will descend rank upon rank: the first heaven of the world will descend, followed by the second heaven, the third heaven, all filled with angels, and the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh. Each comes rank after rank. All consisting of angels when Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) comes to Judge between people.

Who doesn't know of Allah's Name and Attributes? Such as His Attributes of Perfection, descriptions of Majesty and Beauty. He is Exalted and free from any and all deficiencies and flaws. Whoever does not know Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) is astray.

A person **must** know Allah. Whoever knows Allah fears Him more. He fears Allah, acts, and increases in obedience. The closer the servant draws to Allah, the more his reverence and fear of Him increases, and he draws closer to Allah always and forever. He improves his conduct with Allah by increasing acts of obedience and staying away from sins and evils. Whoever fears a human runs away from him.

If I fear a person, I run away from him. But Allah, we fear Him yet we cannot run away from Him.

اللَّهُمَّ لا مَلْجَأَ وَلا مَنْجَا مِنْكَ إِلَّا إِلَيْكَ

"O Allah, there is no refuge nor escape from You except to You."

We flee to Allah (سبحانه وتعالى).

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says in the Qur'an:

وَلِلَّهِ الأَسْمَاءُ الحُسْنَى فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا

"And (all) the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allah, so call on Him by them."[17]

[17] Sūrat al-Aʿrāf (7:180)

Meaning, from the Names of Allah:

O Generous One, bestow upon us from your Generosity; O Forbearing One, show us forbearance, and so on.

He has Names by which we call upon Him.

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says in this verse:

And (all) the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allah, so call on Him by them, call upon Him by His Most Beautiful Names, or whatever you wish.

But keep your tongue firm upon asking Allah (سبحانه وتعالى).

وَلِلَّهِ الأَسْمَاءُ الحُسْنَى فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا ۖ وَذَرُوا الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ ۚ سَيُجْزَوْنَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

"And (all) the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allah, so call on Him by them, and leave the company of those who belie or deny (or utter impious speech against) His Names. They will be punished for what they used to do."[18]

Even in the pre-Islamic era they distorted the Names of Allah. They worshiped *al-Lāt* and *al-ʻUzzā*—al-Lāt was distorted from the Name *al-Ilāh*, and *al-ʻUzzā* from *al-ʻAzīz*.

The Names of Allah—the Most Beautiful Names—and the Lofty Attributes of Allah are not subject to deficiency; they are perfect. I am speaking about Allah. Names that indicate great meanings with which our Lord (سبحانه وتعالى) is described in a manner befitting His Greatness and Majesty.

وَذَرُوا الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ

And keep away from those who abuse His Names.

[18] Sūrat al-Aʿrāf (7:180)

Leave these heretics.

Ilḥād (Heresy) is deviating away from the truth; when a person commits heresy, we say he is a Mulhid. This is deviating away from the truth and associating others with Allah, meaning he is a *Mushrik*. Whoever commits heresy has deviated away from the truth.

In our time, misguided sects have deviated and interpreted the Attributes with meanings that do not befit the Majesty of Allah. Like the *Jahmiyyah* and the *Mu'tazilah* that I mentioned, and the *Ash'aris*.

Most people today are *Ash'aris*. They say, *"We are Ahl As-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah,"* while they are a misguided sect. The *Ash'aris* are a misguided sect; they deny the Attributes and Names of Allah. They are from the misguided sects for they are numerous. When you ask one of them, *"Where is Allah?"* they say, *"Everywhere."* No—**Allah is not everywhere!**

Most people today are *Ash'aris* who negated the Attributes and negated the Names and Attributes of Allah altogether. They have committed heresy in this while claiming to be Ahl As-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah. They deviated from the truth. *'Ilhād* is to deviate from the truth, and to turn toward other than the truth and that which contradicts it. Most division and disagreement concern the Attributes of Allah.

All of His Attributes are attributes of perfection; there is no deficiency or flaw in any way. For they belong to Allah. Every Name of Allah is Perfect, and every Attribute of Allah is Perfect. Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) has combined attributes of perfection and descriptions of Majesty and Beauty. Allah is free and exalted above all deficiencies and flaws.

Whoever knows Allah, fears Him more; whoever does not know Allah or deviates from Allah and His Manhaj, is ignorant and miserable, the poorest of the poor.

The Attributes of Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) are all attributes of perfection with no deficiency or flaw in any way. The Attributes of Allah are innumerable and uncountable.

The Names of Allah are innumerable and uncountable. If someone says: we know the authentic hadith that Allah has ninety-nine Names, and it is authentic, however, we have only been taught ninety-nine names, Allah has more than ninety-nine. The evidence for that is another authentic hadith the Messenger ﷺ taught us.

The Messenger ﷺ asked Allah, saying:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ بِكُلِّ اسْمٍ هُوَ لَكَ، سَمَّيْتَ بِهِ نَفْسَكَ، أَوْ أَنْزَلْتَهُ فِي كِتَابِكَ، أَوْ عَلَّمْتَهُ أَحَدًا مِنْ خَلْقِكَ، أَوِ اسْتَأْثَرْتَ بِهِ فِي عِلْمِ الْغَيْبِ عِنْدَكَ

"O Allah, I ask You by every Name that belongs to You: which You have named Yourself with, or revealed in Your Book, or taught to any of Your creation, or kept with Yourself in the knowledge of the unseen."[19]

"I ask You by every Name that You have named Yourself with,"

Meaning, there are Names beyond these Names.

"I ask You by every Name that You have named Yourself with, revealed in Your Book, or kept unto Yourself in the knowledge of the unseen that is with You."

Thus, there are Names taught to people, Names revealed in the Qur'an, and Names Allah kept for Himself that He did not inform us of. We will give examples regarding the Attributes.

[19] Musnad Ahmad (1/391)

The Attributes of Allah may share a name with the attributes of the creation. For example, **Allah is All-Knowing**, and I have some knowledge, or one of us has some knowledge. But Allah's knowledge—no one shares in Allah's knowledge, whoever he may be. There is a great difference between the knowledge of Allah and the

knowledge of humans. Humans themselves differ from one another in knowledge. Some people specialize in worldly sciences and know only the outward aspect of worldly life, While they are heedless of the Hereafter. Others are scholars or people who know about the Hereafter. The Knowledge of Allah cannot be compared to the knowledge of any human, no matter who he is. All Attributes are like this, because Allah knows everything.

وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ ۚ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ ۚ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلا حَبَّةٍ فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الأَرْضِ وَلا رَطْبٍ وَلا يَابِسٍ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ

"And with Him are the keys of the Ghaib (all that is hidden); none knows them but He. And He knows whatever there is in the earth and in the sea; not a leaf falls but He knows it. There is not a grain in the darkness of the earth nor anything fresh or dry but is written in a Clear Record."[20]

This is with the knowledge of Allah (سبحانه وتعالى). Nothing is hidden from Allah. Many things are hidden from humans; a person sees only what he studied or read. But nothing is hidden from Allah—neither on earth nor in heaven.

يَعْلَمُ خَائِنَةَ الأَعْيُنِ وَمَا تُخْفِي الصُّدُورُ

"Allah knows the fraud of the eyes and all that the breasts conceal."[21]

He knows the secret and what is more hidden.

[20] Sūrat al-Anʿām (6:59)
[21] Sūrat Ghāfir (40:19)

An Attribute of Allah may share a name with the creation, but the knowledge of Allah is not preceded by ignorance. My knowledge—I knew nothing until I learned. All of us are like this. The Attributes of Allah are described only from the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and we do not go beyond that. It is not permissible for me to describe Allah with a Name or Attribute from myself, because the Names are *Tawqīfiyyah*, meaning they are prescribed.

Allah is Living, The Ever-Living, The Self-Sustaining. We are all living. The difference is that I die; Allah does not die.

وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الحَيِّ الَّذِي لا يَمُوتُ

"And put your trust in the Ever Living One Who dies not."[22]

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) is Living.

Allah has two eyes, and the evidence is that the Messenger ﷺ described the Dajjāl and said he is blind in the right eye.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لاَ يَخْفَى عَلَيْكُمْ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَيْسَ بِأَعْوَرَ ـ وَأَشَارَ بِيَدِهِ إِلَى عَيْنِهِ ـ وَإِنَّ المَسِيحَ الدَّجَّالَ أَعْوَرُ الْعَيْنِ الْيُمْنَى كَأَنَّ عَيْنَهُ عِنَبَةٌ طَافِيَةٌ

"Allah is not hidden from you; He is not one-eyed," and pointed with his hand towards his eye, adding, "While Al-Masih Ad- Dajjal is blind in the right eye and his eye looks like a protruding grape."[23]

مَا بَعَثَ اللَّهُ مِنْ نَبِيٍّ إِلاَّ أَنْذَرَ قَوْمَهُ الأَعْوَرَ الْكَذَّابَ، إِنَّهُ أَعْوَرُ، وَإِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَيْسَ بِأَعْوَرَ، مَكْتُوبٌ بَيْنَ عَيْنَيْهِ كَافِرٌ

[22] Sūrat al-Furqān (25:58)
[23] Sahih al-Bukhari 7407

"Allah did not send any prophet but that he warned his nation of the one-eyed liar (Ad-Dajjal). He is one-eyed while your Lord is not one-eyed, The word 'Kafir' (unbeliever) is written between his two eyes."[24]

"And your Lord is not one-eyed."

Meaning Allah does not have one eye.

Allah is above the heavens. Many deny this, yet Allah says:

أَأَمِنتُم مَّن فِي السَّمَاءِ أَن يَخْسِفَ بِكُمُ الأَرْضَ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَمُورُ

"Do you feel secure that He, Who is over the heaven…"[25]

Allah Hears (سبحانه وتعالى). One supplication does not distract Him from another. ‘Ā’ishah said a woman pleaded with the Prophet ﷺ, but nothing was hidden from Allah; He heard her completely.

قَالَتِ الحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي وَسِعَ سَمْعُهُ الأَصْوَاتَ، لَقَدْ جَاءَتِ المُجَادِلَةُ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ ـ صلى الله عليه وسلم ـ وَأَنَا فِي نَاحِيَةِ الْبَيْتِ تَشْكُو زَوْجَهَا وَمَا أَسْمَعُ مَا تَقُولُ فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ

قَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّتِي تجَادِلُكَ فِي زَوْجِهَا

"Praise is to Allah Whose hearing encompasses all voices. The woman who disputed concerning her husband (Al-Mujadilah) came to the Prophet when I was (sitting) in a corner of the house, and she complained about her husband, but I did not hear what she said. The Allah revealed: 'Indeed Allah has heard the statement of her that disputes with you concerning her husband.'"[26]

[24] Sahih al-Bukhari 7408
[25] Sūrat al-Mulk (67:16)
[26] Sunan Ibn Majah 188

The Qur'an is not created; the Qur'an is the Speech of Allah. Allah said:

قَالَ يَا إِبْلِيسُ مَا مَنَعَكَ أَن تَسْجُدَ لِمَا خَلَقْتُ بِيَدَيَّ ۖ أَسْتَكْبَرْتَ أَمْ كُنتَ مِنَ الْعَالِينَ

"O Iblis! What prevents you from prostrating to one whom I created with Both My Hands?" [27]

Allah has Fingers.

إِنَّ قُلُوبَ بَنِي آدَمَ كُلَّهَا بَينَ إِصْبَعَينِ مِنْ أَصَابِعِ الرَّحْمَنِ كَقَلْبٍ وَاحِدٍ يُصَرِّفُهُ حَيْثُ يَشَاءُ " . ثُمَّ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم " اللَّهُمَّ مُصَرِّفَ الْقُلُوبِ صَرِّفْ قُلُوبَنَا عَلَى طَاعَتِكَ "

"Verily, the hearts of all the sons of Adam are between the two fingers out of the fingers of the Compassionate Lord as one heart. He turns that to any (direction) He likes. Then Allahs Messenger (ﷺ) said: 0 Allah, the Turner of the hearts, turn our hearts to Thine obedience."[28]

O Allah, the Turner of hearts, turn our hearts to Your obedience.

These are some disputes regarding the Names and Attributes.

[27] Sūrat Ṣād (38:75)
[28] Sahih Muslim 2655

تَأَمَّلْ فِي نَبَاتِ الأَرْضِ وَانْظُرْ

إِلَى آثَارِ مَا صَنَعَ المَلِيكُ

Reflect on the plants of the earth and look at the traces of what the Sovereign King has created.

عُيُونٌ مِنْ لُجَينٍ شَاخِصَاتٌ

بِأَحْدَاقٍ هِيَ الذَّهَبُ السَّبِيكُ

Silver eyes, wide and watchful, with pupils like molten gold.

(The Poet is describing the blossoming Narjis Flower)

عَلَى قُضُبِ الزَّبَرْجَدِ شَاهِدَاتٌ

بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَيْسَ لَهُ شَرِيكُ

Upon emerald stems, bearing witness that Allah has no partner.

فَوَا عَجَبًا كَيْفَ يُعْصَى الإِلَهُ

أَمْ كَيْفَ يَجْحَدُهُ الجَاحِدُ

How astonishing—how can Allah be disobeyed? Or how can the rejector deny Him,

وَفِي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ لَهُ آيَةٌ

تَدُلُّ عَلَى أَنَّهُ وَاحِدُ

when in everything there is a sign indicating that He is One?